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Chairman: Mr. Kiwanuka ..... (Uganda)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

The Chairman: This morning, the First Committee will continue its general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items. Before we start, may I once again take this opportunity to remind delegations to kindly limit their statements to 10 minutes for those speaking in their national capacity and to 15 minutes for those speaking on behalf of several delegations.

Agenda items 57, 58 and 60 to 73

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. Al-Bader (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): We congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election, and we wish you and the members of the Bureau every success in fulfilling your mandate. My delegation will cooperate fully with you in order to ensure the success of our deliberations. We should also like to thank Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his excellent efforts in the area of disarmament and for the comprehensive briefing he gave us yesterday at the opening of the general debate.

Despite the efforts of the international community and the accession of many Member States to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the issue of proliferation remains a primary concern of all the countries of the world and at all levels, as such weapons pose a major threat to international peace and security and a constant and horrific threat to the sustainability of life in general. The acquisition of such unconventional weapons, the proliferation of their technology and the danger that they might fall into irresponsible hands constitute a sword of Damocles hanging over us. In particular, the acquisition of nuclear weapons and their technology has become possible because of the spread of nuclear physicists throughout the world, which is enabling many countries to gain detailed information and access to the secrets of building such weapons. Even worse, the technology for nuclear weapons might fall into the hands of factions that could use them or sell them to any that can pay for them.

Therefore, in order to promote international peace and security, confidence-building between States and Governments, political initiatives that call for a rapprochement among countries, and the fair, equitable and peaceful settlement of disputes, weapons of mass destruction must be eliminated. In this respect, my country welcomes the accession by the Government of Cuba to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and calls on other States to follow suit.

With respect to weapons of mass destruction, let me cite the dangers facing the Middle East region and the inequity in the balance of power that results from Israel's possession of undeclared nuclear weapons. All countries in the region have acceded to the NPT and have assumed their obligations under that Treaty. However, Israel has refused outright to accede to that

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Treaty. It clings to its nuclear arsenal, flouting all international treaties and agreements, as well as appeals by the international community to join the international coalition, to sign the relevant treaties, to place its nuclear installations under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system and to destroy its stockpiles of nuclear weapons.

It is regrettable that some Israel-friendly States continue not only to tolerate Israel's behaviour but are even cooperating in offering facilities and enabling Israel to develop its nuclear technology and to increase its production of weapons of mass destruction.

We are concerned at the double standard that is being applied by the international community in dealing with nuclear-weapon issues. While international pressure is mounting on a certain country that has been accused of acquiring weapons of mass destruction, we are witnessing complete and flagrant tolerance vis-à-vis Israel. This logic is unacceptable and adversely affects the credibility of the United Nations. Such danger confronts us primarily in the Middle East region. We call on the international community and on those countries that have influence on the State of Israel to bring pressure to bear on that State in order to induce it to eliminate its weapons of mass destruction and to work to secure permanent peace.

High-technology biological, chemical and conventional weapons are no less dangerous in terms of international peace and security. The world has suffered in the past from the consequences of conventional wars, at both the bilateral and multilateral levels. The impact of conventional weapons on States that suffered from those wars can be seen in the environment, the people and the flora and fauna.

The State of Qatar was one of the first countries to sign the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, given the adverse and devastating impact over the years of those landmines, which continue to claim innocent lives. In this context, we believe that those States that planted landmines during wartime must commit to removing those mines following the end of the hostilities.

In speaking of conventional weapons, we must recall here that small arms and light weapons are no less dangerous than landmines or booby traps, given the threat they pose to security and stability.

We welcome the fact that the question of confidence-building is of high priority in the context of disarmament. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is an instrument that reflects international cooperation in promoting transparency and in building confidence among States. Nonetheless, my country believes that the Register remains weak because of lack of greater cooperation.

One of the Register's shortcomings is the fact that it has not been expanded to cover all types of weapons including weapons of mass destruction. The Register's continued effectiveness will require greater transparency. We note also the failure to respond on the part of some Member States. If their views are not taken into account, the effectiveness of the Register cannot be increased and it will fail in the fulfilment of its mandate.

Mr. Sun Joun-yung (Republic of Korea): My delegation would like to begin, Sir, by congratulating you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are confident that your diplomatic skills and your dedication to disarmament and non-proliferation will ensure a successful outcome to our discussions.

As we begin the deliberations of the First Committee during this fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, we are mindful of the fact that they are being held against the backdrop of the first anniversary of 11 September — a tragedy of such magnitude that it has changed the perception of global security. In particular, these terrorist acts have heightened our vigilance with respect to the threat of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons falling into the hands of terrorists.

Since 11 September a common sense of purpose, unity and resolve has galvanized the international community in the fight against terrorism. We must seize this opportunity to address the difficult issues of disarmament and non-proliferation, which have eluded agreement in previous sessions.

My delegation underscores the need to strengthen multilateral efforts to promote disarmament and non-proliferation. As a multilateral approach represents the best way to address arms-control issues, there is an increasing need for multilateralism to become more adaptive to the changing dynamics of international security. Moreover, in order to attain the objectives of disarmament and non-proliferation, strenuous efforts at

the bilateral, subregional and regional levels should be pursued in parallel with a multilateral approach.

I would like to touch upon issues of priority to my delegation.

Securing nuclear non-proliferation and achieving progress in nuclear disarmament should be a priority for us all. My delegation is convinced that the 13 practical steps stipulated in the Final Document of the 2000 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conference should be translated into concrete action as soon as possible. Above all, there is an urgent need to achieve universality of the NPT — the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime — and to strengthen its safeguards system through the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In this regard, we welcome the decision of the Republic of Cuba to accede to the NPT. We sincerely hope that this development will encourage the other three States to follow suit as soon as possible.

Recent developments within the nuclear landscape have reaffirmed the central role of the IAEA, as a fundamental pillar of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, in ensuring compliance with the non-proliferation obligations of the NPT.

In that regard, we urge the States parties that have yet to conclude and bring into force safeguards agreements to do so as soon as possible. Furthermore, my delegation fully supports the initiatives of the IAEA — particularly its programmes designed to safeguard nuclear material against non-peaceful uses, to ensure the safety and security of nuclear facilities and to deter the illicit trafficking of nuclear material and radiation sources. Those measures aim to reduce the likelihood of nuclear terrorism and to enhance our capabilities to combat such threats. In recognition of the importance of achieving the universality of the Additional Protocol, my Government is taking the domestic measures necessary for its implementation.

The Republic of Korea would like to take this opportunity to urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to lend the IAEA its full cooperation, without further delay, for the implementation of safeguards obligations under the NPT and the Geneva Agreed Framework of 1994. North Korea's full cooperation with the IAEA is not only a prerequisite for uninterrupted progress in and completion of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization light-water reactor project, but is also essential for the inter-Korean peace process.

We believe that the processes of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament are mutually reinforcing and should proceed simultaneously. In that regard, we welcome the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty, signed by the United States and by the Russian Federation in May 2002. We hope that that agreement between the two largest nuclear Powers will inspire other nuclear-weapon States to further reduce their nuclear arsenals and adopt enhanced transparency and accountability measures. They should do so on the basis of the principles of irreversibility, transparency and verifiability. We also welcome the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, adopted by the Group of Eight last June.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) remains the most important unfinished business on our agenda. It is not accidental that it was featured at the top of the list of the 13 practical steps of the NPT Final Document. The international community should take every opportunity to demonstrate its clear and strong support for the Treaty as an essential pillar of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. We call upon those States whose ratification is necessary for the Treaty's entry into force to sign and ratify it without further delay. We would also like to underscore that, pending the Treaty's entry into force, it is vital that the moratorium on nuclear testing be maintained. In that regard, we welcome the Joint Ministerial Statement on the CTBT issued in New York last month.

It was disappointing once again to see this year's Conference on Disarmament end in continued stalemate because of the divergence of views with regard to its programme of work. While the collective will to achieve consensus was evident, the Conference was unable to deal with the new security environment. That impasse can be obviated only through significant political will and the spirit of compromise. Given the overwhelming desire expressed by Conference members, the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear devices should not be held up by disagreements over other issues. The conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) will constitute not only a practical step towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, but also an effective means of

combating nuclear terrorism by reducing the risk that loose nuclear materials might fall into the wrong hands. Therefore, we believe that an immediate commencement of the negotiations is in the best interests of the international community.

There is a need for disarmament and non-proliferation regimes relating to weapons of mass destruction to become more resilient and adaptive to emerging threats, especially the potential use of chemical and biological weapons by terrorists and by other non-State actors. As part of such efforts, the First Committee should pay close attention to the issues of chemical and biological weapons.

My Government, as an active member of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), attaches great importance to ensuring the universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the full compliance of States parties with their obligations in accordance with the Convention. Given the danger that chemical materials might fall into the wrong hands, the issue of industry inspection is gaining attention within the framework of the Convention. My delegation hopes that, under its new leadership, the OPCW will be more efficient in carrying out its challenging tasks and that the First Review Conference of the Convention, to be held next year, will provide a valuable opportunity for useful discussion on more effective implementation of the Convention.

With regard to biological weapons, national, bilateral and multilateral efforts are all necessary in order to combat the threat posed by biological weapons. Within the framework of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), it is our sincere hope that, in the interests of strengthening the Convention, States parties will be able to devise an effective work programme at the resumed Review Conference of the Convention, to be held in November this year.

Global efforts to counter the growing threat posed by ballistic missile proliferation should be redoubled. In that context, my delegation welcomes the adoption of the draft International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, initiated by the members of Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). We look forward to the early launch and universalization of the Code, which holds great significance as the first international norm against the proliferation of ballistic missiles.

My delegation believes that effective and rigorous enforcement of export controls is a key component of the non-proliferation infrastructure. The more non-State actors become engaged in the transfer of materials and technologies and the more diversified such transfers become in their patterns, the greater the necessity for States parties to enforce export controls at the national and global levels. Based on that strong conviction, the Government of the Republic of Korea has elected to hold the plenary meeting of the Nuclear Suppliers Group in Seoul in May 2003 and will assume the chairmanship for the subsequent year. At the recently held General Conference of the MTCR, it was decided that my Government would host the 2004 General Conference. My delegation is also pleased to announce that my Government and the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs will co-host the International Conference on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Issues, to be held on Jeju Island in December 2002.

I turn now to the field of conventional arms. Measures to combat and prevent illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons are of the utmost concern. My delegation welcomes the regional initiatives that are currently encouraging the implementation of the Programme of Action, and we look forward to the biennial meeting in 2003 as providing further impetus to that endeavour. My Government strongly supports the promotion of confidence-building measures to facilitate the process of disarmament and arms control. We regard the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms as an occasion to strengthen its role as the voluntary repository of data on armaments and thereby to ensure wider participation by the international community. On the Korean peninsula, we have begun mine-clearing operations in the Demilitarized Zone this month as a precursor to reconnecting cross-border rail and roads. This constitutes an important step forward for inter-Korean confidence-building. We hope that this development will pave the way for further positive measures within the framework of military confidence-building measures between South and North Korea in the near future.

In concluding, let me say that the past year has brought us to the threshold of new hopes and formidable challenges in the arena of global peace and security. This session of the First Committee has an

important responsibility to address those issues. We look forward to working closely with other delegations in the coming weeks.

Mr. Bruno Stagno (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the Member States of the Rio Group — Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela, Guyana representing the States of the Caribbean, and my own country, Costa Rica, on your well-deserved election to chair the work of the First Committee. I can assure you of the support of all the members of the Rio Group so that together we can bring our work to the greatest success possible.

I would also like to thank the other officers of the Committee. By the same token, allow me to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament, Mr. Dayantha Dhanapala, and the Department for Disarmament Affairs for the leadership and professionalism with which they have supported all the initiatives in favour of disarmament. We would also like to thank Ambassador Dhanapala for his statement before this Committee.

One year ago, after the despicable terrorist attack of 11 September, this Committee and the General Assembly adopted resolution 56/24 T on "Multilateral cooperation on disarmament, non-proliferation of arms and global efforts against terrorism". The Rio Group wishes to open this general debate by reaffirming its commitment to multilateralism as the fundamental principle in disarmament and non-proliferation negotiations. It emphasizes the urgent need to renew this commitment, not only to maintain international peace and security but also to contribute to the global fight against terrorism.

The Rio Group is a model of multilateralism. Since its creation 15 years ago, the Rio Group has been a standing machinery for political consultation and agreement, and has promoted both dialogue and the adoption of specific proposals to achieve peace, strengthen democracy and foster the development of the Latin American region.

The members of the Rio Group welcome the creation of the South American Zone of Peace and Cooperation at the Second Meeting of South American Presidents, held last July in Guayaquil, Ecuador, with a view to contributing to the security and development of the region.

The Rio Group reiterates its commitment to the implementation of the international legal instruments on disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We welcome the opening of a new cycle looking towards the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The member States of the Rio Group are ready to work constructively in the strengthening and revitalization of this crucial treaty. We welcome Cuba's decision to accede to this treaty, and we urge the three States that are still operating nuclear installations without safeguards in the region to join the treaty.

Moreover, we must express our concern at the fact that the Thirteen Measures on Nuclear Disarmament annexed to the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference have not been fully implemented. We regret the lack of substantial progress on this issue.

The Rio Group condemns the development of new nuclear weapons. We endorse the results of the Conference on Measures to Facilitate the Entrance into Effect of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), and we invite all States to sign this crucial instrument.

As Members of the first nuclear-free zone, we the member States of the Rio Group welcome and commend Cuba's decision to ratify the Treaty of Tlatelolco. This act will bring into force the first denuclearized regime in an inhabited zone.

Furthermore, we welcome the consolidation of Mongolia's status as a nuclear-free zone. We urge the five Central Asian States to finalize their negotiations on a treaty that would establish a nuclear-free zone in their region. In the same vein, the member States of the Rio Group support the creation of a nuclear-free zone in the southern hemisphere and its neighbouring areas.

Once more, we fully reaffirm the communiqué issued by the Rio Group Foreign Ministers on the transport of radioactive material and hazardous wastes. That document was distributed in September last year under the symbol A/56/360. We call upon the international community to strengthen the international legal regime applicable to the security of maritime transport of radioactive waste.

We are convinced that the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction is the best way to achieve international peace and security. In this context, we trust that the negotiations being held in Geneva to strengthen the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction with provisions for verification will make some progress. We believe that the Convention on the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and Their Destruction is an essential instrument for disarmament and non-proliferation.

Regarding conventional arms, the member States of the Rio Group have agreed to broaden the bilateral, regional and global confidence- and security-building measures, particularly within the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United Nations, where participation in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms constitutes an important undertaking towards international peace and security. In this context, we reiterate the importance of the standardization of the military expenditures accounting systems.

In the San José Declaration, our heads of State and Government endorsed a proposal for an effective and gradual reduction of the defence expenditures in the region. This plan will make it possible to allocate a part of the defence budgets to fighting poverty through the promotion of education, health and social programmes for the benefit of the people while taking into account each country's security needs as well as current levels of expenditure. In this context, they welcomed the progress already made and to be made in the future, both at the bilateral and multilateral levels, to attain this goal as established in the Santiago Declaration, and they agreed to exchange information on the initiatives and measures adopted by our countries to implement this proposal.

We are convinced that complete elimination of the weapons of mass destruction is the best way to achieve international peace and security. The member States of the Rio Group are fully committed to attaining the goals of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We reaffirm our commitment to make our region a zone free of this kind of weapons. This commitment was expressed in Geneva a few days ago at the Fourth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention.

In the San José Declaration, our heads of State and Government reiterated their deep concern over the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and reaffirmed their political resolve to prevent, combat and eradicate it, in accordance with the Programme of Action of the relevant United Nations Conference and the Inter-American Convention against Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunitions, Explosives, and Other Related Materials.

In conclusion, the States members of the Rio Group express their gratitude for the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Development and Disarmament in Latin America and the Caribbean, located in Lima, Peru. That body has supported countless regional disarmament initiatives, stimulated debate on security and contributed to coordinating United Nations efforts to promote peace and security region-wide.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to commend you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee and to assure you of the full support of the Cuban delegation. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

Due to its importance, I would like to begin by reiterating the announcement, made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cuba in his statement in the general debate of the General Assembly on 14 September, to the effect that our country has decided to become a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a signal of the clear political will of the Cuban Government and its commitment to an effective disarmament process that will ensure world peace. In so doing, we reaffirm our hope that all nuclear weapons will be totally eliminated under strict international verification.

Cuba intends actively to involve itself in the preparatory process of the coming NPT Review Conference and to work with other State parties that share our concerns about the limitations of the Treaty and the lack of fulfilment of obligations by the nuclear-weapon States. In addition, and despite the fact that the only nuclear Power in the Americas pursues a policy of hostility towards Cuba that does not rule out the use of force, Cuba will also ratify the Treaty for the

Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which was signed by our country in 1995. The Government of the Republic of Cuba has already initiated the necessary national domestic procedures to become a State party to both Treaties in the shortest possible time. I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to thank the numerous delegations that have welcomed or intend to welcome Cuba's decision, in this debate or at any given moment.

The emergence of a unipolar world has not resulted in greater security for most of us. On the contrary, despite the end of the cold war, military expenditures continue to increase on an accelerated basis, at the expense of the allocation of more resources to development.

How much could be achieved if only a part of the $849 billion dollars that are allocated annually to military expenditures — almost half of which is spent by only one country — were invested in the assistance of 815 million hungry people, 1.2 billion people living in abject poverty, 854 million illiterate adults, 2.4 billion people without basic sanitation or the 40 million human beings sick with or having contracted the AIDS virus? Would it not be much better to use those huge amounts of money to reduce the difference in income between the richest and the poorest countries, which was 37 times greater in 1960 and now stands at 74 times greater?

Thus, Cuba restates the proposal of agreeing, as an immediate step, that 50 per cent of funds currently earmarked for military spending be channelled to a fund available to the United Nations for sustainable development. That would instantly raise more than $400 billion.

Some United States Government senior officials have addressed slanderous accusations against Cuba, alleging that our country is engaged in a "limited, developmental, offensive biological warfare research and development effort". Once again, Cuba vigorously rejects such lies. In contrast to the United States, Cuba does not possess and never intends to possess any weapon of mass destruction. It is the United States and not Cuba that opposes the strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention by means of a protocol that includes transparent and non-discriminatory international verification measures.

Cuba restates the validity of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Expert Group, which has been negotiating the aforementioned protocol for more than six years, and calls on the United States to discontinue its insistent attempts to ignore the many years of effort invested by the international community.

Multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament is at a critical juncture. Of urgent concern is the tendency to unilateralism of the Government of the major military Power, reflected in, among many other examples, the negotiations on the protocol to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention; its abrogation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty this year; its progress towards the deployment of a national anti-missile defence system; its opposition to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; and its inclusion of key proposals in the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Through blackmail and pressure, including the threat to stop paying its financial contributions, the United States had the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons dismissed in April this year. It is unacceptable that any country, no matter how powerful, should dictate at whim who may or may not take key posts in an international organization, solely on the basis of its narrow national interests.

Furthermore, the United States Nuclear Posture Review was revealed early this year, by which the potential uses of nuclear weapons are enhanced, including among potential targets countries that do not possess such weapons, and an attempt is made to legitimize the indefinite possession of these weapons. Additionally, the United States is now seeking to impose on us the so-called pre-emptive war doctrine, a clear violation of the spirit and letter of the United Nations Charter, while Iraq is being threatened by unilateral military action if the Security Council does not yield to pressures to endorse this new war.

Nowadays, while it is more threatened than ever, Cuba defends even more vigorously the need to preserve multilateralism in international relations. Preventing unilateralism from being consolidated and eroding the role of the United Nations is a collective responsibility and begins with such elementary actions as ensuring resources and the appropriate number of meetings for specialized bodies on disarmament.

The Department for Disarmament Affairs is the smallest in the United Nations and the First Committee meets less than any other Main Committee. Yet, the convening of an even more curtailed session was actually proposed this year, which fortunately did not occur. The United Nations Disarmament Commission, the only universal deliberative specialized body on disarmament, could not meet this year because other events on the United Nations agenda were considered of higher priority. The Conference on Disarmament remains stagnant and has not been able to begin negotiations on the highest priority disarmament issue — nuclear disarmament — due to some countries' inflexible positions.

Cuba considers of major importance the adoption this year by the First Committee of a resolution on the full validity of multilateralism in the field of disarmament. We expect such a resolution to enjoy the strong support of Member States.

Ms. Inoguchi (Japan): At the outset, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, on your assumption of the chairmanship of this Committee at this very important juncture. I am confident that, with the benefit of your diplomatic experience and skill, our deliberations will be most fruitful. You may be assured of my delegation's full support and cooperation as you lead the work of the Committee. I would also like to express my appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Jayantha Dhanapala for his excellent statement yesterday.

Let me begin by recalling the horrific terrorist attacks of 11 September, which posed extraordinary challenges to the international security situation. Unprecedented in scale, the attacks illustrated the increasingly international character of terrorist activities. The international community must take concerted action against international terrorism in order to address this growing threat. I would like to take this opportunity to express the solidarity of my country and its people with the United States of America and the entire international community as we pursue this common endeavour.

Since the events of 11 September, the international community has made significant progress in its fight against terrorism. But it must do more, and arms control and disarmament is one area in which greater efforts must be made. The initiative launched by the Group of Eight (G-8) at the Kananaskis Summit to prevent the spread of weapons and materials of mass destruction has great relevance to the fight against terrorism. My country will contribute more than $200 million to that initiative. We also commend the efforts made by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to upgrade worldwide protection against acts of terrorism involving nuclear and other radioactive materials. Japan has pledged to contribute $500,000 to the special fund set up for the implementation of the IAEA action plan against nuclear terrorism.

In addition to terrorism, unresolved regional conflicts, some threatening the security of the entire world, continue to cause human suffering. There is a fear that weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, may be used in these conflicts. Their resolution therefore remains a high priority for international peace and security.

With regard to the situation in North-East Asia, the Prime Minister of Japan, Mr. Junichiro Koizumi, recently visited the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, where he met with Chairman Kim Jong-Il. The two leaders signed the Pyongyang Declaration, in which both sides confirmed that, for an overall resolution of nuclear issues on the Korean peninsula, they would comply with all related international agreements. They also confirmed the necessity of resolving security problems, including nuclear and missile issues, by promoting dialogue among the countries concerned.

I would also like to refer to the Iraqi issue. Iraq must comply with all the relevant Security Council resolutions. In particular, it must allow immediate and unconditional inspections and dispose of all weapons of mass destruction.

It is the fervent wish of Japan, as the only country to have experienced the devastation caused by nuclear bombs, to see the attainment of a safe, nuclear-weapon-free world. We believe that the most effective way to achieve that goal is through practical and concrete steps in nuclear disarmament. Japan highly values the signing of the treaty on strategic offensive reductions between Russia and the United States, and expects that this treaty will serve as an important step towards nuclear disarmament efforts.

At the same time, we are gravely concerned about the obstacles to the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). This Treaty represents a historic multilateral step towards

nuclear disarmament and strengthens the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Japan has been doing its utmost, through bilateral contacts and multilateral means, to encourage non-signatories and non-ratifiers to accede to the Treaty. Last month, building on the achievements of the Conference held in accordance with article XIV in November 2001, Japan, together with Australia and the Netherlands, took the initiative of issuing a joint ministerial statement on the CTBT. The three countries are inviting other countries to be included in the list of issuers of the statement; the list currently includes 18 Foreign Ministers from all geographic regions. The statement will be forwarded to the Secretary-General to be circulated as an official document of the United Nations. I would like to take this opportunity to call upon all States to join this meaningful statement. In addition, my country is fully cooperating with the Preparatory Commission for the CTBT Organization for the establishment of a verification system. Pending the entry into force of this Treaty, however, it is imperative that the States concerned maintain the moratoria on nuclear-weapon-test explosions.

We are deeply disappointed at the six-year-long stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament and its failure again this year to commence negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Such a treaty would be a significant step for nuclear non-proliferation and an essential building block for further nuclear disarmament. Moreover, the strengthened control of nuclear materials under a fissile material cut-off treaty will aid in the prevention of nuclear and radiological terrorism. For these reasons, negotiations must be commenced immediately, in accordance with the mandate that was agreed upon in 1995. The series of educational seminars that the Netherlands is currently conducting is benefiting all delegations in Geneva by preparing them for the negotiations once they begin.

The maintenance and strengthening of the regime established by Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is essential to achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. It is particularly important to promote the universality of the NPT and to ensure full compliance with the Treaty by all Member States. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the decision of Cuba to accede to the Treaty, as well as to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

With the first session of the Preparatory Committee in April, a good start has been made in the NPT review process leading up to the 2005 Review Conference. I would like to stress the need for the implementation of the agreements contained in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference.

It is important to promote the universality of the additional protocol to the IAEA safeguards agreement as an effective means to stem non-compliance. Japan organized a seminar for the Asian-Pacific region in June of last year, and since then has been contributing to seminars held in Latin America, Central Asia and Africa. It will hold a conference for the same purpose in Tokyo this December.

With regard to Central Asia, having assisted the efforts made by regional States and the United Nations, Japan is particularly pleased that the negotiations on the text of the Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone treaty have been concluded. Japan looks forward to the signing of the treaty in the near future.

Again this year, my delegation will submit to the General Assembly a draft resolution entitled "A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons." We look forward to its adoption with the support of an overwhelming majority of Member States.

Efforts to strengthen the Chemical Weapons Convention and to support the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons must be continued.

In order to address the threat of biological weapons, it is necessary to create a comprehensive strategy with the Biological Weapons Convention as its most fundamental element. However, since the suspension last year of the Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention, States parties have yet to agree on common ground so as to strengthen this multilateral convention. It is critical for the success of the Review Conference in November to agree on a follow-up mechanism addressing a focused agenda of certain key issues. We will continue to support the efforts by Ambassador Tibor Toth, President of the Conference, to bring about a convergence of positions.

The international community must address the proliferation of ballistic missiles, which is increasingly a threat to international as well as regional peace and security. States must make genuine efforts to restrain and reduce missile activities and to prevent their proliferation. Japan supports the universalization process involved in an international code of conduct. This process must establish a new norm that will truly

contribute to preventing the proliferation of ballistic missiles.

The gravity of the problem of small arms and light weapons is all too well illustrated by the fact that these weapons cause more than 90 per cent of all casualties in armed conflicts, equalling approximately 500,000 deaths every year. The Programme of Action adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects last July is a historic landmark representing the collective will of the international community to address such problems. In the months since the Conference, Japan has been actively contributing to the implementation of this Programme. Earlier this year it held a meeting in Tokyo as a follow up to the Conference, and next January it will organize a seminar on the problems of small arms in the Pacific region. Another seminar will be held on the Asian region in February, with the cooperation of my Government, the Government of Indonesia and the United Nations.

Assistance to those countries affected by small arms is essential, and the international community must unite its efforts to mobilize the available resources. Japan has been active in this area, too, by extending assistance in cooperation with the United Nations and its regional centres for peace and disarmament. For example, it sent research missions to Bougainville and Sri Lanka, in cooperation with the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs. Japan has also decided to support United Nations activities in the field of disarmament education in Cambodia, in addition to providing bilateral assistance for a weapons-for-development programme. Furthermore, we have recently begun a joint research programme with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research on arms collection projects in various countries. Japan will spare no effort to help affected countries in this priority area.

Japan attaches particular importance to the activities of the United Nations tracing study Group, which is aimed at studying the feasibility of an international instrument to prevent illicit trafficking in small arms. The objective of the first biennial meeting, to be held next year, will be to make the implementation of the Programme of Action more effective and efficient by exchanges on lessons learned by States and international and regional organizations, as well as by non-governmental organizations. It is hoped that in this way a solution to the problem will be found more quickly. Japan will make a contribution to support the success of this meeting.

Here I should like to highlight the gender aspect of the small arms issue. One of the extraordinary aspects of contemporary wars and conflicts is the large proportion of non-combatants among the victims. As a matter of fact, the greatest number of conflict-related deaths of women and children are caused by small arms.

This year, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is celebrating the tenth anniversary of its establishment as a result of a joint initiative of the European Community and Japan. Since 1992, the Register has been playing a significant role in promoting transparency in arms, and in order to enhance its universality, Japan has been organizing, with Canada, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Nations, a series of regional workshops. Another workshop is being planned in Indonesia next February for the Asia-Pacific region. I would like to take this opportunity to remind delegations that the tenth anniversary symposium will be held here in New York on 15 October, with the cooperation of those four countries and the United Nations. Ambassador Mitsuro Donowaki will make a keynote statement at that symposium.

Japan has also been making vigorous efforts to enhance the universality of the Ottawa Convention, particularly in Asia and the Pacific Region. The seminar, organized by the Government of Thailand in May, provided an excellent opportunity to promote the Convention in the region. The next meeting of States parties will be held in Bangkok; it will be the first such meeting to be convened in the Asia-Pacific region.

Japan will assist Thailand by serving as a Co-Rapporteur of the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Awareness and Mine Action Technologies.

In addition, we have been actively participating in the deliberations of the Group of Governmental Experts which was established at the Review Conference of States Parties to the Certain Conventional Weapons Convention in December last year. Japan is eager to see a positive outcome of the Meeting of High Contracting Parties in December this year on the issues of anti-vehicle mines and explosive remnants of war.

Education on disarmament and non-proliferation should be promoted at all levels. We have just received the report of the United Nations expert group on this issue and look forward to its implementation by Member States and relevant organizations.

My country has received as many as 400 participants in the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Programme over the past 20 years. The Programme includes visits to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It enables junior diplomats, in particular, to gain a deeper understanding of different disarmament issues, and many former fellows are now diplomats active in this field. Japan will continue to support this worthwhile Programme.

My country appreciates the activities of the three United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament. Having attended the United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues, held in Kyoto in August this year, I believe that these activities should be further enhanced. They help us to focus on, and conduct in-depth analyses of, disarmament issues in relation to broader and urgent global problems which are on the agenda of the United Nations.

In the current international security environment — one in which terrorism is a major threat — arms control and disarmament should be promoted at every level, including the bilateral and multilateral levels. The Moscow Treaty between Russia and the United States was a major bilateral achievement. The Group of Eight (G-8) also agreed on an initiative for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. All that is lacking now is progress on multilateral disarmament. It is urgently necessary to break the current stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament and to start substantive work towards that goal. During this year's annual session, the Conference on Disarmament witnessed a historic cross-group effort, initiated by five ambassadors, to achieve agreement on a programme of work. The international community is eager to see — even during the closing period — some form of progress brought about through various efforts in Geneva as well as in the capitals of States members of the Conference.

Before concluding, I would like to stress the importance of addressing the root causes of the various threats to international peace and security, including terrorism and regional conflict. From this viewpoint, it is important, in post-conflict situations, for the international community to cooperate for the structural prevention of the resurgence of conflict, not only through disarmament and demobilization but also by promoting economic and social development, democratization and reconciliation. That approach will help to ensure a fundamental, long-term and comprehensive solution to security problems in volatile areas. I believe that the international community must take such an approach in order to consolidate peace and stability around the world in the twenty-first century.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): It gives me great pleasure to see you, Mr. Chairman, presiding over the work of the First Committee. I would like to take this opportunity to convey to you my warmest congratulations and sincere wishes for success in the difficult task that is before you — a task that I am sure you will fulfil to the satisfaction of all Member States.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate all of the members of the Bureau and to assure them of the full support of my delegation. I would also like to pay a warm tribute to your predecessor, Mr. André Erdős of Hungary, for the outstanding manner in which he directed the work of the Committee during its previous session.

Finally, I should like to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his dedication and his invaluable contribution to the cause of disarmament.

The deep-rooted changes that led to the end of the cold war and its ideological antagonisms gave rise to tremendous hope for the advent of a new international order based on a renewed vision of peace and stability in the world — a vision that would bring with it a new type of strategic thinking that would repudiate the military option as a safeguard for national security and rehabilitate the doctrine of collective security taking precedence over competition among the nuclear Powers. Such a vision would mean evaluating the power of a country not by the size of its military arsenal but rather by its capacity to promote peace, security and international cooperation and to share progress and prosperity with others.

Unfortunately, our optimism that global and universal security could be promoted such that it would be better adapted to those new changes has been somewhat undermined by the lassitude that seems recently to have overcome the nuclear disarmament

process — a process that should remain our highest priority. Indeed, the attitude that was in evidence immediately after the end of the ideological confrontation, and which, furthermore, yielded encouraging results in disarmament matters, today shows disturbing signs of becoming increasingly inflexible. Indeed, it may well be that such flexibility has been once and for all sacrificed on the altar of narrow military strategic considerations that can in no way be justified.

The great impetus given to the disarmament process by the conclusion of a series of treaties, both multilateral and bilateral, in particular those relating to the banning of biological and chemical weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, has considerably slackened. That impetus has to be maintained if we wish to make progress towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which has been the goal of the international community since 1946. Nuclear disarmament is, indeed, the only way to save humankind once and for all of the scourge of war and to guarantee peace and security throughout the world.

Previous bilateral and unilateral initiatives, however praiseworthy they are and despite their considerable effect on the process of dismantling nuclear weapons, have been piecemeal and inadequate. They have to be supplemented by more decisive actions in order to give vigour and consistency to the nuclear disarmament structure. Unilateral and bilateral steps to reduce nuclear arsenals can be no substitute for the multilateral approach, which is the only avenue for a comprehensive and thorough treatment of the question of nuclear disarmament.

From that point of view, we urgently need to reactivate the Conference on Disarmament, which is the only multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament should encourage without delay negotiations on further agreements and multilateral arrangements to neutralize the nuclear threat and to give full effect to article VI of the NPT, which we hold to be binding. The historic commitment made here in New York during the Sixth Review Conference, in which nuclear States quite unambiguously agreed to completely eliminate their nuclear arsenals, must be honoured. For that reason, we solemnly reiterate the validity of, and imperative need for, implementation of that agreement. In fact, the elaboration of treaties on fissile material, on nuclear disarmament and on the prevention of an arms race in outer space remains the only concrete action that can give real meaning and life to the process of nuclear disarmament and can fulfil our legitimate demand that those fearsome weapons be completely eliminated.

Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, it is imperative that the Conference on Disarmament take charge of the elaboration of a binding legal instrument guaranteeing the non-use of such arms against States that have renounced the military use of nuclear energy under the NPT. In that regard, my delegation fully supports the new initiative put forward in Geneva by our representative on behalf of his colleagues from Belgium, Chile, Colombia and Sweden. The purpose of that initiative is to free the Conference on Disarmament from the deadlock with which it has been struggling for a number of years, to relaunch its substantive work and to begin in good faith negotiations to prepare such treaties, as the International Court of Justice requested of us in its advisory opinion of July 1996. It also supports the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament to identify ways and means to give impetus and vitality to the disarmament process and to make irreversible progress towards nuclear disarmament.

As well, my delegation must express the importance and interest that it attaches to the principle of irreversibility with regard to nuclear disarmament and measures to control and to reduce nuclear weapons.

Nevertheless, achieving that noble objective fundamentally depends on the determination of nuclear States to promote the advent of an international order that is no longer founded on weapons-based supremacy, but in which security — to be indivisible, universal and undiminished — must become the most widely shared value of all humankind. The nuclear States must also resolutely promote a new approach to disarmament which will result in renunciation of the nuclear doctrine, which has become obsolete and outdated.

My delegation welcomes Cuba's decision to accede to the NPT and to ratify the Treaty of Tlatelolco. Through that decision, Cuba has confirmed its commitment to nuclear disarmament and has given real impetus to the universality of the NPT.

The creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones effectively contributes to strengthening the non-

proliferation regime, to efforts to eliminate the nuclear threat and to the maintenance of international peace and security. We therefore welcome the creation of such zones by the four Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Pelindaba and Bangkok. We hail the efforts made to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. The 27 September 2002 acceptance by a group of experts from Central Asian States of the text of a draft treaty establishing a denuclearized zone in that region was an important step forward and therefore deserves our full support. We express the fervent wish that similar concrete actions will be undertaken in areas of tension such as the Middle East and South Asia.

The lack of progress on the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East deeply worries us. It is due to the refusal of Israel, the only country in the region not to have acceded to the NPT, to eliminate the nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in its possession and to submit its nuclear installations to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency. That lack of progress highlights — if this were needed — the importance of making the NPT universal and the extent of the selectivity and discrimination to which that principle is subjected. It should also prompt us to demand that Israel accede to the treaties on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

My delegation notes with satisfaction the conclusions of the report of the Secretary-General (A/57/229) transmitting the work of the Panel of Governmental Experts on the issue of missiles in all its aspects. That initiative, which we absolutely must encourage, constitutes a very important step enabling us to deal, within the framework of the United Nations system, with the very delicate issue of missiles, which, despite their peaceful applications, are first and foremost fearsome delivery vehicles for weapons of mass destruction.

Our demand for general and complete disarmament is a product of our firm conviction that there is no alternative to disarmament, which is the only way to free humankind once and for all of the threat of annihilation, to ensure world peace and security and to free up for economic and social development the resources currently spent on arms. We have always believed that the questions of disarmament, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and international security are inextricably linked to economic and social development. In that regard, Algeria gives its full support to the proposal of the Secretary-General to create a group of governmental experts to study the relationship between disarmament and development in the current international context, as well as the future role of the United Nations in that domain.

As well, Algeria, which has a strong and vital commitment to a collective security able to create a new era of peace, peacefulness and well-being, has chosen to allocate only a very modest percentage of its revenues to national defence and is committed to promoting research and development for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to participating in the various disarmament efforts.

Our greatest hope is to see the end of the cold war and the qualitative evolution of international relations — which are at the origin of the irreversible globalization movement, with its attendant promises, challenges and threats — give shape to the elements of a new international order that gives primacy to dialogue and cooperation, and which heralds a new age based on a renewed strategic approach of peace and stability.

Today, economic and social development should be the true foundation of peace and coexistence among peoples, at a time of global threats such as terrorism, drug trafficking, pandemics and organized crime, which humankind must face collectively, because those phenomena compromise stability and impede all development efforts.

To achieve that, we must go beyond partial, selective and ad hoc responses to be able to ensure that we deal comprehensively with these common concerns and to make shared well-being and prosperity the international community's most important project. That is Algeria's aspiration, and those are the essential principles that underpin the policy of my country, which has constantly worked sincerely to promote cooperation and dialogue and to strengthen security within the traditional framework of belonging and solidarity.

Encouraged by the political will to build a cooperative space to strengthen the historic links among the peoples of the Maghreb, Algeria will work tirelessly with the other countries of the Maghreb to establish a stable, single, homogenous and prosperous grouping among the five countries that make up the Arab Maghreb Union.

Algeria has also energetically involved itself in the settlement of conflicts in Africa and has worked ceaselessly to promote real solidarity among the countries of the new African Union, which has replaced the Organization of African Unity. In that context, our country actively participated in launching the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which is intended as a strong, common approach to ensuring that the Africans themselves take charge of the development of the African continent.

Furthermore, making the Mediterranean a lake of peace and cooperation has always been a basic objective of Algeria's international policies. Indeed, our desire to make the Mediterranean basin a haven of peace, security and cooperation is evident in our support for the Barcelona Declaration, a manifestation of the new perception of the Euro-Mediterranean area, and for other mechanisms for cooperation that have clearly shown that there is recognition of the special historic nature of relations among the countries on both shores. The commitment expressed by my country to the process of building a Euro-Mediterranean space is based on its profound conviction that only common and concerted action can consolidate stability and security in that region and, as part of a comprehensive approach, to lay the basis of solidarity and cooperation based on common interests and a mutually advantageous partnership.

The signing in Madrid, on 22 April 2002, between Algeria and the European Union, of the historic Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement, which establishes a new framework for cooperation between the two parties is the achievement of our shared determination to deepen and widen cooperative relations in the Euro-Mediterranean space.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasize that in our increasingly interdependent world, never have the peoples of the world been so close tc each other. However, much remains to be done to turn our planet into the global village where we aspire to live together. We must work resolutely to reduce inequalities between the rich and the poor in order to better share prosperity and well-being. In other words, we must establish a new international order that is more humane and non-discriminatory in its effects and benefits, and that banishes once and for all the spectre of nuclear threat.

Hence, we are convinced that disarmament is the only sound option for the future of mankind, provided that there is a spirit of solidarity and cooperation among peoples and that it is recognized that the security and comfort of some should not come at the price of the underdevelopment and intimidation of others.

Mr. Hu Xiaodi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee at this session of the General Assembly. With your rich experience and outstanding diplomatic skill, you will surely guide this session to success. You and the other members of the Bureau can rest assured of the full cooperation and support of the Chinese delegation. I would also like to express my appreciation to Ambassador Erdös of Hungary for his excellent work as Chairman at the past session.

Not long ago, we commemorated the anniversary of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks. While sharing the grief of the bereaved, we should draw lessons from that tragedy, soberly examining, from a wider perspective, the problems and the challenges to international security and should seek effective ways to achieve lasting peace and common security in the world.

In recent years, with economic globalization rapidly unfolding, countries are sharing many more common interests and ever closer security links. There is greater awareness among countries of the need for dialogue and cooperation. Relations among major countries have improved steadily. Peace and development remain the main theme of the times.

However, we must not overlook problems in the field of international security. Non-traditional security threats such as terrorism are posing a grave challenge to international security. The tragic incident of 11 September 2001 was a stark manifestation of these developments. Although there has been significant headway in the international efforts against terrorism, that threat is far from being eradicated. In both the traditional and non-traditional security dimensions, instability and unpredictability in the overall international security situation are increasing.

In that new situation, ensuring that history is not repeated and creating a peaceful and prosperous new century depends on our ability to seize the historic opportunity and to cope with the new challenges. It is

imperative to foster a new security concept characterized by mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation, and to address diverse security problems, old and new, with new thinking and approaches.

First, we should strive for the democratization of international relations. Exclusion and confrontation should give way to inclusion and dialogue, so as to improve international relations overall and to achieve a new situation where all countries coexist in a win-win relationship. Secondly, we should promote multilateralism and resolve the problems facing the international community through dialogue and cooperation. Thirdly, we should intensify diplomatic efforts to settle 0regional hot spots so that lasting peace and stability can be realized in all regions. Fourthly, we should take a comprehensive approach and address both the symptoms and the root causes of non-traditional security threats such as terrorism and transnational organized crime. While making joint efforts to combat terrorism, we also need to have a long-term perspective and try to eradicate underlying social and economic sources of terrorism.

To prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery and to eliminate those weapons eventually is crucial for maintaining and enhancing international peace and security. The increasing threat of terrorism today has brought more urgency to international non-proliferation efforts and new challenges to the international non-proliferation regime.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery has complex causes and is directly related to the regional and global security environment. The fundamental solution of this problem requires an improvement in overall international relations and lies in political, legal and diplomatic means. The use or threat of force does not help, and will be counterproductive. The full participation of and close cooperation among all States are prerequisites for the success of international non-proliferation efforts and a guarantee of impartiality and sustainability in those efforts. In that regard, we should give full scope to the role of the United Nations and other international organizations.

China supports the efforts of the United Nations, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. We welcome the valuable report submitted by the United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on the issue of missiles in all its aspects (A/57/229). China is in favour of making necessary amendments to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and hopes that all parties will bridge their differences in a constructive manner so as to enable the early conclusion of the amending process. In March 2002 China completed the legal procedures for the entry into force of the additional protocol to the Safeguards Agreement between China and IAEA, the first among the five nuclear weapons States to do so. We encourage those States that have not yet done so to take the same step at an early date, thus contributing to the strengthening of the IAEA safeguards regime.

China has always been firm in its policy of not supporting, encouraging or assisting other countries to develop weapons of mass destruction. As a country with certain scientific, technological and industrial capabilities, China is fully aware of its international non-proliferation responsibilities. Over the decades, China has adopted strict measures on the domestic management and export control of sensitive items and technologies, making concrete contributions to the international non-proliferation process. For years, China has constantly improved its export control mechanism and has promulgated a series of laws and regulations on the control of exports of sensitive items on the basis of its own practice and drawing upon the experience of other countries. In view of the new situation after its entry into the World Trade Organization and the September 11 terrorist attacks, China has intensified its efforts to enhance its export control by legal means. Recently, the Chinese Government promulgated the regulations on export control of missiles and the missile-related items and technologies, and the missiles and the missile-related items and technologies export control list.

China has thus put its export control of missiles and related items and technologies, as well as missile-related dual-use items and technologies, into a legal framework. Moreover, to further improve export controls of chemical and biological dual-use items, the Chinese Government will soon promulgate the administrative rules on export control of chemical items and related equipment and technologies, and the

regulations on export control of biological dual-use items and related equipment and technologies.

With the promulgation of the above-mentioned regulations China will establish a comprehensive system of export control over sensitive items covering the nuclear, biological, chemical and missile fields. We will continue to enhance law enforcement to ensure full implementation of existing laws and regulations and to improve our non-proliferation mechanism in light of the changing situation. We would also like to further broaden and deepen exchanges and cooperation with other countries in the non-proliferation field so as to make greater contributions to the international non-proliferation process.

Disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually complementary. Without effective non-proliferation, disarmament could hardly be achieved. Without progress in disarmament, non-proliferation could hardly be effective and sustainable. Therefore, preserving the authority and universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is critical for nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. In this connection China welcomes the decision of Cuba to prepare for accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and ratification of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. China supports the full implementation of the thirteen nuclear disarmament steps as contained in the Final Document of 2000 NPT Review Conference on the premise of maintaining global strategic stability and undiminished security for all countries. China always supports and is ready to contribute to the NPT review process.

China welcomes the new treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation on the reduction of strategic offensive forces. China hopes that the United States and Russia, as countries with the largest arsenals and very special and primary responsibilities for nuclear disarmament, will continue to drastically reduce and destroy their nuclear weapons in a verifiable and irreversible way.

The comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is an important step towards nuclear disarmament. China supports its early entry into force. It is critical for all the nuclear weapon States to maintain a nuclear testing moratorium before the Treaty enters into force. China has actively participated in the work of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty Organization and has carried out domestic preparations for the implementation of the Treaty. China is ready to work with the international community to facilitate the early entry into force of the Treaty.

The prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons is of significance in the nuclear disarmament process. China supports the early negotiation and conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty. We hope that the Conference on Disarmament will reach a comprehensive and balanced programme of work as soon as possible so as to commence the negotiation of this treaty. China has shown considerable flexibility to that end. We expect other countries to respond positively so that the Conference on Disarmament can carry out substantive work at an early date.

After more than a decade since the end of the cold war, it has become a common aspiration of the international community to shake off the cold war mentality. To achieve this objective, we should first and foremost establish a new concept of cooperative security and seek common security for all countries. In the field of strategic security, the reliance on nuclear weapons should be diminished. It runs counter to the trend of the times to develop missile defence systems designed to strengthen unilateral deterrence, lower the threshold for nuclear weapons used and increase targets for nuclear attacks. This is not only detrimental to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts but is also harmful to international peace, security and stability.

As the Chinese saying goes, prevention is better than cure. One of the major purposes of arms control is to prevent new arms races in new fields. Today, this preventive function is most salient in outer space.

With the drastic development of space science and technology, more and more countries are benefiting from the peaceful use of outer space, and our daily life is increasingly linked to outer space. Peaceful uses of outer space offer a bright prospect for the progress of human civilization. However, the shadow of the weaponization of outer space is looming large. We must set to work urgently to ensure peaceful uses of outer space and prevent it from becoming a new battlefield.

While looking back with regret at the historical mistakes of the cold war in the competition for nuclear

advantage, we should be wise enough to avoid repeating the same mistakes and to prevent the weaponization of, and an arms race in, outer space. This is an issue where world peace and the long-term interest of all countries are at stake. It is encouraging to note that this issue is drawing increasing attention from the international community, as demonstrated by the General Assembly resolutions adopted for many consecutive years and non-governmental organization seminars devoted to this issue.

As the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, the Conference on Disarmament should re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space and start substantive work with a view to negotiating and concluding an international legal instrument on preventing the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space at an early date. For this purpose, China, together with Russia and some other countries, submitted to the Conference a working paper entitled "Possible elements for a future international legal agreement on the prevention of the deployment of weapons in outer space, the threat or use of force against outer space objects" (*CD/1679*) in June this year. This working paper is also circulated as an official document of the current session of the General Assembly (*A/57/418*). We would like to register our gratitude to the countries concerned for their useful comments and suggestions, and we will continue to conduct serious and earnest discussions on this issue with all parties, further drawing on their views and suggestions to improve and enrich the above-mentioned document.

China always strictly and faithfully fulfils its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and actively supports and participates in the work of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We would like to congratulate Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter on becoming Director-General of the OPCW. We believe that under the leadership of Ambassador Pfirter the OPCW will pass this transitional period smoothly, get back on track and make new progress in the implementation of the Convention. China is ready to work with other member States for the comprehensive and effective implementation of the Convention and the smooth operation of the OPCW.

With the joint efforts of China and Japan, progress was made last year in the disposal of chemical weapons abandoned by Japan on the Chinese territory. We hope that the substantive destruction process will start as soon as possible so that the grave threat posed by these weapons to the local environment and to the lives and property of the local people can be eliminated within the time-frame set forth in the Convention.

China has supported, and actively participated in, the negotiation of the protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). We deeply regret that the protocol failed to come to fruition as expected. In the current situation, it is particularly important to strengthen the effectiveness of the Convention. Therefore, China welcomes and is willing to discuss within the multilateral framework any suggestions and measures aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of the Convention. With the resumed session of the Fifth BWC Review Conference approaching, China wishes to work with other parties in a constructive manner to seek consensus on specific mechanisms and measures for strengthening the effectiveness of the Convention, so that the conference can achieve concrete results.

China has consistently supported international efforts to address the illicit trade in small arms. The Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the conclusion of the Firearms Protocol to the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime represent major steps by the international community in this connection. It is of great importance fully to implement the Programme of Action and to facilitate the early entry into force of the Firearms Protocol. We are pleased that the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms is currently examining the issue of the identification and tracing of illegal small arms. We hope that the Group's efforts will produce positive results. China has always attached great importance to the control of the production of, and trade in, small arms. We are now faithfully implementing the relevant measures contained in the Programme of Action and looking into the issue of signing the Firearms Protocol.

China supports the international efforts under way to strengthen the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). We welcome the successful conclusion of the Second CCW Review Conference at the end of last year. We also welcome the decisions adopted at the Conference to amend Article 1 of the Convention by expanding the scope of application of the CCW and to establish a Group of Governmental Experts to further explore issues such as explosive

remnants of war. After two sessions of the Group of Governmental Experts this year, the parties are converging with respect to some aspects of the issue of explosive remnants of war. China wishes to join with other States parties to move this process forward.

In recent years, China has been actively engaged in international demining assistance and has achieved good results. In 2002, China has earmarked about $3 million for international demining cooperation, which is mainly used for mine clearance assistance to Eritrea and Lebanon. Besides providing the two countries with demining equipment, we have also sent an expert group to Eritrea to train local demining operators. China will continue with international demining assistance within its capacity. We are also willing to cooperate with other States and international organizations to contribute to the strengthening of international demining efforts.

Conducting various forms of exchanges and cooperation helps enhance mutual trust, eliminate suspicions, broaden common ground and advance the processes of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. In this regard, we deeply appreciate the fruitful work done by the United Nations in recent years. China attaches importance, and actively devotes itself, to dialogue and cooperation in the field of arms control and disarmament.

In recent years, we have been conducting fruitful consultations with many countries. Last April, China and the United Nations co-sponsored an international conference on "A Disarmament Agenda for the 21st Century". The Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Dhanapala, senior Government officials from more than 20 countries and representatives of non-governmental organizations attended the conference. They conducted in-depth discussions and put forward useful suggestions on such important issues as nuclear disarmament, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, missile non-proliferation and the role of the United Nations in the disarmament field. A booklet containing a summary of the conference and the statements made will shortly be published by the Department for Disarmament Affairs.

After decades of unremitting efforts, the international community has established a relatively complete international arms control and disarmament legal system, which has become an important and stabilizing factor in the global security architecture. In the context of the current situation, this system has an even more important role to play. Therefore, to preserve this legal system and further to promote the course of international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation serves the common interests of all States and is also their shared responsibility. China will join other countries in their efforts towards this objective.

Mr. Zaqueu (Mozambique): At the outset, Sir, I would like to join previous speakers in congratulating you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I am confident that under your skilful guidance and given your outstanding experience, our deliberations will be crowned with success. I would also like to extend my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

The delegation of the Republic of Mozambique also wishes to assure you of its full support and cooperation as you discharge your important responsibilities. Let me also pay tribute to your predecessor for the excellent manner in which he discharged his duties as Chairman of this Committee during the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

Disarmament, arms control and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction remain high-priority issues on the United Nations agenda. The 11 September events demonstrated to all of us the dangers of international terrorism. The likelihood of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons or their components falling into the hands of terrorists multiplies the destructive potential of international terrorism. Therefore, the international community must unite to strengthen and reinforce the non-proliferation regime.

Unfortunately, international efforts towards meaningful cooperation on nuclear disarmament have been rather unimpressive. The Conference on Disarmament has not been able to move forward, as negotiations on nuclear disarmament and on a treaty on fissile materials remain deadlocked. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has yet to enter into force, and the implementation of the results of the 2000 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has yet to become a reality. As a result of this gloomy picture, the threat of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction continues unchecked.

This situation needs to be reversed. The goal of nuclear disarmament must be pursued vigorously

through the universalization and operationalization of the existing legal framework, based on the NPT and the CTBT.

Mozambique welcomes the announcement by Cuba that it will accede to the NPT and ratify the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. We welcome also the signing of the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation in May 2002, aimed at reducing deployed strategic nuclear weapons. These positive developments need to be highlighted and further reinforced.

Non-proliferation is a must. We believe that the NPT and the CTBT remain the cornerstone of an effective non-proliferation regime. However, our ultimate goal should be the universalization of those critical legal instruments, with the goal of achieving complete nuclear disarmament.

We are still confronted with the issue of the prevailing threat of anti-personnel landmines, which continue to disrupt the very existence of nations and peoples. During the Fourth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, held in Geneva from 16 to 20 September, Governments, civil society and the private sector reaffirmed their commitment to the total eradication of anti-personnel landmines.

We must start now to prepare for the Convention's First Review Conference, which is due to take place in 2004. It is our hope that the Conference will result in the adoption of meaningful recommendations to address, in a comprehensive manner, the issue of anti-personnel landmines.

We are happy to note that more than 120 States have acceded to the Convention. We urge all States that are not yet parties to it to adhere to the Convention.

Mozambique is committed to playing an important role in combating landmines. I would like to reaffirm once again Mozambique's commitment to conclude, by 2003, the destruction of all stockpiled mines, in accordance with the provisions of the Ottawa Convention.

The illicit trade in, and proliferation of, small arms and light weapons is the main cause of violence and economic and social instability, particularly in developing countries. In that regard, we stress the importance of full and prompt implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eliminate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Through its realistic, integrated and action-oriented approach, the Programme of Action is undoubtedly the best option at this point for concrete effort towards curbing the destabilizing and easy availability of small arms and light weapons, particularly in African, Asian and Latin American countries.

We need to take concrete actions at the regional, subregional and national levels to bring about the noble goals of halting the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in the world. During the 2003 mid-term review conference we will have the first opportunity to take stock of the progress and failures registered in the implementation of the Programme of Action, with a view to devising the appropriate strategies to continue to deal with this global problem. We encourage all Member States and other stakeholders to participate actively in the event and to work for the full implementation of the Programme of Action.

One of humankind's crucial goals continues to be the need for disarmament and the need for peace and international security around the world. Our success in achieving those goals will greatly depend on the manner in which we accommodate our individual and collective interests. Let us work together to ensure the attainment of those objectives and to enable the United Nations to fulfil its obligations. Mozambique, as in the past, is prepared and committed to lend its modest contribution to those noble goals.

As the Committee may recall, during the Millennium Summit, our leaders committed themselves to spare no effort to free our peoples from the scourge of war and to seek to eliminate the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. That commitment must be translated into deeds without delay. We must free the world from all threats of war and violence. We must gear all our efforts towards ensuring the peace, stability and security that human kind so richly deserves. This is within our reach. We must act now in a decisive manner.

Mr. Yap (Singapore): Please allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. My delegation is

confident that, under your able leadership, we will be able to discharge our duties efficiently and effectively. We also extend our appreciation to the previous Chairman, Ambassador André Erdös of Hungary, for his work during the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

The world has moved from one era to another, with differing security settings. Dynamism and constant change clearly describe the international security environment. Developments in disarmament, however, appear not to have kept pace with the security transformations. Looking back at the work of the First Committee since it was formed, it is reasonable to ask whether the Committee has been like an airplane on auto-pilot in approaching disarmament issues. Did we tend to ignore the repeated warnings from aircraft instruments and air traffic controllers of the dangers ahead, and steered the airplane not quite in the right direction? Now that the global security environment has made another major shift, after 11 September, it is opportune to ask ourselves whether the First Committee should conduct a strategic review of its work and re-examine the course that our aircraft should take.

The United Nations is a key player in disarmament issues, and has been since the inception of our Organization. Disarmament is one of the United Nations most important responsibilities. Under the Charter, the General Assembly is to consider the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments. In fact, the General Assembly's very first resolution, adopted on 24 January 1946, identified as a goal the elimination of atomic and other weapons of mass destruction. The General Assembly has had the topic of general and complete disarmament on its agenda since 1959. In 1978, following the Assembly's first special session on disarmament, the First Committee was refocused to emphasize disarmament and related security issues.

The world and the international security environment have changed in many ways since the First Committee assumed the mantle as a champion of disarmament, almost a quarter of a century ago. Yet, in contrast, the First Committee seemed to be somewhat behind the curve on the disarmament issues of the day. We appeared to be somewhat unresponsive to the real situation on the ground.

During the cold war, terrified at the prospect of mutually assured destruction, the main concern of the First Committee was with weapons of mass destruction. The international community developed an obsession with nuclear disarmament, and understandably so. However, that was done at the expense of addressing the threat and harm posed by other weapons. What is ironic is that the millions of conflict-related fatalities between the Second World War and the end of the cold war had little to do with nuclear weapons. Most of those who died were the victims of conventional weapons in wars of national liberation and in the proxy wars of the cold war era. Should not the First Committee have more vigorously addressed the massive flow of conventional arms that fuelled those wars?

Killings by small arms and light weapons and other conventional weapons continued after the cold war in civil and ethnic conflicts and resource wars. But it was only after an overwhelming groundswell of public sentiment, led by non-governmental organizations, that the United Nations took firm steps on several conventional disarmament issues, such as curbing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and containing the humanitarian impact of landmines. Why, then, did the First Committee not take the lead on those issues? As a key player in disarmament, it is the duty of the Committee to take the front seat of the aircraft and to steer it in the right direction.

The date of 11 September marked the start of yet another era in the international security environment, one that brings with it new challenges for the First Committee. Determining the direction that disarmament should take in that new era is one of the key challenges that the Committee must face. Our delegation does not pretend to know the answers, nor are the answers in plain view. To ensure that this disarmament instrument effectively addresses the security threats posed in the post-11-September period, we urge the Committee to conduct a strategic review of its work, as it should from time to time when there are significant changes to the security landscape.

Obviously, we cannot continue to discuss disarmament after 11 September without taking into account its association with the menace of terrorism. We now live in a new world, where all of us are vulnerable to asymmetric terrorist attack on a scale not previously thought possible. Even the most powerful

country in the world is not immune. We have seen how everyday items can be creatively morphed into weapons for terror and destruction. Small arms, light weapons and other conventional weapons, as well as weapons of mass destruction, can all fall into the hands of terrorists.

The illicit and uncontrolled proliferation of conventional weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons, is already contributing to terrorism. With the diversion of illicit small arms and light weapons to terrorist networks, acts of terrorism have increased in number and magnitude around the world. Terrorist groups have used rifles and machineguns acquired from illicit sources to carry out acts of terror against the innocent. The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects came up with a comprehensive Programme of Action. Many of the measures are also targeted at terrorist organizations, in a way, but more can be done to specifically stem the traffic of small arms and light weapons to terrorists. The First Committee must take up this responsibility, in parallel with the United Nations focus on combating terrorism.

The looming terrorist threat also means that the First Committee should look at disarmament by nation States in the proper context. Certainly, the United Nations must address the economic and social conditions that encourage terrorism. At the same time, however, the terrorism threat makes it imperative for all countries to maintain the capacity to defend themselves. States should neither give the upper hand nor provide breeding grounds to terrorists who have no qualms about attacking society in the most vicious ways. Vegetius said: "Let him who desires peace prepare for war." It is the duty of nation States to equip themselves adequately to protect their citizens against acts of terror. Take, for example, Afghanistan. Without a credible and well-armed security force, it can neither behead the multi-headed Al Qaeda hydra that has been breeding in its midst nor prevent the creature's regeneration.

Let me turn to weapons of mass destruction. It is clear that weapons of mass destruction do not make the world a safer place. Their potential for destruction is too great. Nuclear weapons have been described, and rightly so, as a sword of Damocles hanging over mankind. With the mere push of a button, the human race could be destroyed. Similarly alarming are chemical and biological weapons — terrifying weapons capable of wreaking instant and devastating damage.

Can we thus imagine the horrors should weapons of mass destruction be used by terrorists? Indeed, the threat of weapons of mass destruction terrorism is real and the danger posed by terrorist acts using weapons of mass destruction is ominous. The key to combating terrorism using weapons of mass destruction is to ensure that no terrorist can get his hands on nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. This means, for example, greater focus on curbing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ensuring the proper destruction of excess weapons of mass destruction, even as nuclear disarmament is pursued. The growing potential of weapons of mass destruction terrorism certainly deserves a strategic review by this Committee of disarmament measures targeting these weapons.

Let me conclude by saying that we are not asking this Committee to reinvent the wheel. It is evident that many of the First Committee's initiatives are relevant to this new era, in which terrorism is of key concern. In fact, the measures against weapons of mass destruction proliferation and illicit small arms and light weapons are more relevant now than ever. It would be prudent, however, for the First Committee not merely to look into what more needs to be done to curb the flow of arms and weapons to terrorist groups, but to engage in a strategic rethinking of its work in the post-11-September era. Perhaps the First Committee could hold interactive discussions or roundtables on disarmament and terrorism during its next session. It is in our collective interests to take our aeroplane off autopilot and to steer it responsively to the signals that we receive in this new era.

The Chairman: I call on the Permanent Observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Martino (Holy See): The Holy See congratulates you, Sir, on your election as Chairman, and my delegation assures you of its cooperation in your leadership of this important Committee. My delegation also wishes to express its appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Jayantha Dhanapala for his important address to this Committee yesterday and for his outstanding contribution to peace and disarmament around the world.

The General Assembly has considered the theme of general and complete disarmament annually since 1959. The threats to international peace and security

faced by the world today are in some important respects different from those of 40 years ago. When we met last year, the horror of the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, D.C., was fresh in our minds and our resolve to stamp out terrorism strong. While Governments continue to be deeply concerned about terrorism, our role in this Committee is to ensure that the processes of disarmament continues.

The order imposed by the circumstances of the cold war no longer exists and our thinking on disarmament must reflect the new realities of today. For instance, by signing, on 24 May 2002, the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty, States that were once adversaries agreed to reduce the number of strategic nuclear warheads from 2,200 to 1,700 by the year 2012. While the reductions could have gone further, and even though the Treaty would have been more reassuring if it had provided for irreversible disarmament, transparency and effective verification, the agreement should be welcomed as a new sign of cooperation. The world awaits and, in fact, seriously needs more of the same.

Practical disarmament measures to consolidate peace, regional disarmament agreements and, especially, the measures adopted to curb the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons can be re-energized. These steps, along with the strengthening of the relationship between disarmament and development, can have tremendous effects by improving conditions for human security throughout the world.

The threats posed by biological and chemical weapons have received much attention, partly because rather small amounts of material can have pervasive and devastating effects. All of us have seen the fear and hysteria that trace, but deadly, amounts of anthrax can produce. Because these threats respect no borders, multilateral efforts towards their elimination are absolutely necessary. The world's security now depends on how well States can adapt to these new circumstances. It is a duty of the first order.

During these next few months, the Fifth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) will reconvene to complete work on negotiating a legally binding verification protocol. The first session of that review can hardly be termed a success.

A re-energization of this process is clearly called for and that is why the Holy See decided to accede to the BWC on 4 January 2002. As stated in the Holy See declaration attached to its instrument of accession to the BWC,

> "the tragic events of 11 September 2001 have led to a clearer and more widespread awareness of the need to build a culture of multilateral dialogue and a climate of trust between all the members of the human family. At this particular point in history, instruments of cooperation and prevention constitute one of the most effective safeguards in the face of heinous acts, such as the use of biological weapons capable of indiscriminately striking at innocent civilian populations".

When the BWC, prohibiting the development, production and stockpiling of bio-weapons, was opened for signature in 1972, it was the first-ever arms control Convention to completely ban a whole class of weapons. However, it lacked mechanisms for monitoring or verifying compliance. However, it lacked mechanisms for monitoring or verifying compliance. In 1995, work began on drafting concrete measures to ensure that countries comply with the Convention. The setback that occurred at the Fifth Review Conference last year must be overcome because the future biological weapons prohibition regime must be strengthened.

The 145 States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention should agree on a comprehensive list of measures, perhaps to be implemented in stages, that would ensure a strengthening of the Convention through increased transparency and an increase in potential detection and deterrence of prohibited activities. Such an approach would build confidence in the Convention.

In the past year, two important conferences — on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — were held in the nuclear weapons field. Here again, troubling signs of discord were evident. As stated in the Holy See declaration attached to the instrument of accession to the CTBT dated 18 July 2001,

> "The Holy See is convinced that in the sphere of nuclear weapons, the banning of tests and of the further development of these weapons,

disarmament and non-proliferation are closely linked and must be achieved as quickly as possible under effective international controls".

A major step forward was taken when the CTBT was opened for signature in 1996. When the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT was held in 2001, 161 States had signed and 87 had ratified the Treaty. But now the momentum appears to have stalled. While all nations and peoples must be grateful that a moratorium on testing is still holding, the resistance to achieving the requisite number of ratifications threatens a collapse of the architecture of the non-proliferation regime that has painstakingly been built over many years.

The second conference, the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference, also revealed that nuclear disarmament efforts had stalled. At the 2000 NPT Review Conference, the nuclear-weapon States pledged an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. A programme of 13 practical steps was adopted for systematic and progressive nuclear disarmament. But the hopes raised in 2000 were dashed in 2002 when it became clear that the nuclear-weapon States were not adhering to the 13 steps.

The Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, now abandoned, and the CTBT were both integral to the 13 steps. So can that which was agreed on in 2000 be cast aside just two years later? It must not be forgotten that genuine multilateral efforts are required to achieve nuclear disarmament. These, by their very nature, possess the potential to guarantee universal and permanent norms that bind all States. In this respect, the NPT remains the centrepiece of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, and the value of the NPT depends on all parties honouring their obligations. The NPT plays a critical role in efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, especially to terrorists and States that support them.

The concern of the Holy See increases as we see the non-proliferation regime, with the NPT as its cornerstone, in disarray. The old policies of nuclear deterrence, which prevailed during the time of the cold war, must now yield to concrete disarmament measures, based on dialogue and multilateral negotiation, which are essential values in the disarmament process. Through the instruments of international law, they facilitate the peaceful resolution of disputes, help ensure better mutual understanding and foster a climate of trust, cooperation and respect among all States. In that way they promote the effective affirmation of the culture of life and peace, which is based upon the values of responsibility, solidarity and dialogue.

The Holy See has stated in this Committee many times, and it repeats now, that there can be no moral acceptance of military doctrines that embody the permanence of nuclear weapons. They are incompatible with the peace we seek for the twenty-first century; they cannot be justified. These weapons are instruments of death and destruction.

Cooperation among Governments, including the military and humanitarian organizations and other representatives of civil society, in implementing the Landmines Convention has been exemplary in building trust and goodwill among all concerned groups. The physical or ideological distance between concerned groups or similar difficulties facing disarmament activities need not be an insurmountable obstacle. In this era of interdependence, it is no longer tolerable to condemn, through inaction, entire populations to live in fear and precariousness.

This Committee has done valuable work over many years in raising the norms and standards for disarmament in all its aspects. Though the cycles of history bring with them both advances and retreats, we must keep our minds focused on our goal of reducing the causes of war. Pope John Paul II, in his World Day of Peace message for 2002, entitled "No Peace without Justice, No Justice without Forgiveness", expressed a great hope, based on the conviction that evil, the *mysterium iniquitatis*, does not have the final word in human affairs.

The techniques of mediation, negotiation and verification are still being advanced today. They provide a basis of hope for humanity. These are the steps we must support in the continuing quest to eliminate the weapons of war.

The Chairman: I congratulate Archbishop Renato Raffaele Martino on his appointment to the presidency of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace at the Vatican. I would like, on my own account and on behalf of every one here, to congratulate him. I think it is very good to have a friend at the Vatican.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.